Pentagon Won't Release Bombing-Pause Photos

Post 5/11

Associated Press

The Defense Department has decided against making available for publication aerial reconnaissance photographs of North Vietnam made during and since the 37-day pause in bombing.

Requests for release of some of the pictures were made by news media representatives earlier this week.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara has turned down the requests for reasons of security, Arthur Sylvester, Pentagon press chief, said Thursday.

Officials told newsmen earlier in the week that photographic reconnaissance over North Vietnam was carried out every day during the pause in the bombing, to check on reconstruction work at damaged target areas, movement of troops and supplies toward South Vietnam and any possible prospective new targets.

The reconnaissance flights showed, among other things, that the North Vietnamese were taking advantage of the bombing pause to carry on daylight reconstruction of bridges, highways, supply dumps and other targets which had been damaged or destroyed by air attacks before the lull.

Until then, much of the rebuilding and repair had been done under cover of darkness while the danger of air attacks was lessened.